

MINUTES OF THE
MAG 9-1-1 OVERSIGHT TEAM MEETING

August 16, 2005
MAG Office Building, Ocotillo Room
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Harry Beck, Mesa Fire Department, Chair	* Helen Gandara-Zavala, Scottsdale Police
Jim Higgins for Mark Burdick, Glendale	Department
Fire Department	Jay Spradling, Tempe Police Department
Steve Werner, Maricopa County	Lawrence Rodriguez, Tolleson Police
Sheriff's Office	Department
* Mike Fusco, Emergency Management, Peoria	Susan MacFarlane for the Phoenix Fire
Dave Faulkner, Phoenix Police Department	Department

* Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.

Attended by telephone conference call.

+ Attended by videoconference call.

OTHERS PRESENT

Mike Benjamin, Phoenix Fire Department	Liz Hunt, CENS Program Manager
Valerie Day, MAG	Barbara Jaeger, State 911 Office
Dave Eaton, Phoenix Fire Department	

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Harry Beck, at 2:09 p.m. Chairman Beck presented Susan MacFarlane with a Resolution of Appreciation upon her retirement. Chairman Beck stated that Ms. MacFarlane met the challenge of assuming the 911 Administrator position after the retirement of Jim Wortham. Mr. Spradling commented that Ms. MacFarlane's skills resulted in making the Tempe center a much more professional organization.

2. Call to the Audience

An opportunity is provided to the public to address the 911 Oversight Team on items that are not on the agenda that are within the jurisdiction of MAG, or non-action agenda items that are on the agenda for discussion or information only. Citizens will be requested not to exceed a three minute time period for their comments. A total of 15 minutes will be provided for the Call to the Audience agenda item, unless the Oversight Team requests an exception to this limit. Opportunities for comment on items posted for action are provided at the time the item is heard. Chairman Beck noted that no public comment cards had been turned in.

3. Approval of the February 23, 2005 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Spradling moved to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2005 meeting. Mr. Faulkner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. MAG FY 2007 PSAP Annual Element/ Funding Request and FY 2007-2011 Equipment Program

Ms. MacFarlane reviewed the MAG FY 2007 PSAP Annual Element/Funding Request and FY 2007-2011 Equipment Program. She stated that because most PSAPs have been upgraded, the FY 2007 budget requests were for logging recorders and additional workstations. Ms. MacFarlane advised that requests required proper justification. She stated that the budget includes the equipment list and funding to Qwest for the data network cost and for maintenance. Ms. MacFarlane noted that the budget is projected for five years. However, the State realizes that conditions change and as a result does not hold us to past one year.

Chairman Beck asked if the needs of all of the PSAPs were being met. Ms. MacFarlane replied that they were. He then asked Ms. MacFarlane if she anticipated anything unforeseen in the budget process. Ms. MacFarlane replied that this year's budget process is rather straightforward and includes just support and standard maintenance costs. She mentioned that changing out equipment is on schedule through the end of the next calendar year.

Mr. Werner moved to recommend approval of the MAG FY 2007 PSAP Annual Element/Funding Request and FY 2007-2011 Equipment Program. Mr. Spradling seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Werner asked the impact of interoperability on 911. Ms. MacFarlane replied that from a 911 perspective, all public safety communications are tied together. However, radio communications are outside the scope of the 911 system. Ms. MacFarlane commented that an effort on interoperability is underway.

5. Update on the Community Emergency Notification System (CENS)

Liz Hunt updated members on CENS. Ms. Hunt stated that so far this year, CENS has been launched 23 times, compared to 15 launches in all of 2004. She noted that the Regional Council approved that beginning July 1, 2005, each agency would pay for their launches. Ms. Hunt stated that there was concern that costs associated with a launch would result in agencies not using CENS; however, since July 1, already there have been two launches. Ms. Hunt noted that the approved criteria for launching CENS were not followed by one agency when they launched CENS to 22,000 homes at 4:00 a.m. to notify residents that a missing child had been found. She stated that a lot of complaints were received and she has since had a discussion with the agency to help them understand appropriate uses for CENS. Ms. MacFarlane stated that the vendor graciously decided to not charge for the launch.

Mr. Werner stated that the Sheriff's Department received complaints from a CENS launch to approximately 600 to 800 homes during the Cave Creek wild fires. He stated that some were upset at having to prepare for an evacuation that never happened. However, because of the unpredictability of the wind shifts, the Department felt it was better to notify those who might be affected.

Mr. Faulkner asked about the necessity for followup calls after a CENS launch. Ms. Hunt replied that a followup call is needed if residents have been told to stay indoors. She added that the followup call needs to be in plain language and launched in a timely manner after the incident has ended.

Chairman Beck asked the statistics for CENS launches. Ms. Hunt replied that CENS averages about a 60 percent completion rate. She noted that some calls are not completed because no one is home, the number is a fax, etc.

Mr. Spradling asked the status of assuming control of the 911 database in order to reduce costs. Ms. Hunt replied that recently, the monthly fee to Qwest decreased from approximately \$52,000 per month to approximately \$38,000 per month. She added that the contract with Qwest runs until September 2006, so the 911 Office will not be pursuing other options until then.

Mr. Werner passed along to Ms. Hunt the many compliments he has heard on her job performance.

Chairman Beck stated that ongoing funding for CENS is the next issue to be worked on after implementation of the wireless project is complete.

6. Wireless Phase I and II Implementation

Ms. MacFarlane stated that implementation of wireless Phase I and II is anticipated for completion by September 30, 2005. She informed members of the testing schedules around the Valley. Ms. MacFarlane said that there has been some good publicity on the success stories from wireless implementation, such as the little girl in Mesa who called 911 when her mother went unconscious.

Mr. Spradling asked about the protocols for followups on dropped wireless calls. Ms. MacFarlane commented that a Wireless Working Group had developed policies for dropped calls that were provided to the PSAPs.

Chairman Beck asked the status of the excise tax. Barbara Jaeger, State 911 Office, explained that the excise tax is slated to decrease in FY 2007 from 37 cents to 28 cents, and in FY 2008 it will decrease to 20 cents. She advised that in FY 2008 it is projected that the 911 fund will go into a deficit.

Ms. MacFarlane stated that the 911 Office, lobbyist Sandra Junck, and the telecommunications lobbyists will be meeting September 15. She advised that it costs us \$2 million per year for wireless cost recovery. Ms. MacFarlane commented that we need the telecommunications industry to understand that a decrease in the excise tax hurts them—if we do not have the funds, we cannot pay them for their services.

Ms. MacFarlane noted issues with VoIP. She said that VoIP is not taxed because the FCC does not view it as a telecom service. As more people choose VoIP, less tax to fund 911 will be collected.

Ms. Jaeger stated that the increase in wireless is leveling off. She indicated that it grew 46 percent from 2002 to 2003 and only increased eight percent last year.

Chairman Beck stated that he brought the tax issue up at the State Fire Chief's meeting. Ms. Jaeger stated that the tax will need to be addressed the next session. Ms. MacFarlane stated that work has begun and we hope to get support for a resolution at the League Conference in September. Ms. Jaeger stated that the State 911 fund spent \$10 million last year on wireless implementation.

Chairman Beck commented that the Oversight Team needs to be involved in the tax plan. He commented that public safety agencies carry a lot of weight. Chairman Beck stated that we went high profile last time and were not entirely successful. Mr. Higgins asked if there would now be support for the tax? Ms. MacFarlane replied that it depends on how it is presented. Ms. MacFarlane stated that she thought the resistance from the telecom companies was due to the fact that they were unprepared for deployment. She commented that they receive a large amount of money per month. Chairman Beck requested that the Oversight Team be kept up to date. He also mentioned including the Tucson area, because between MAG and Tucson, there are a lot of votes.

7. Maintenance of the 911 Equipment

Mike Benjamin reported that the MAG 911 Maintenance Team is now fully staffed with five techs and one supervisor. He said that in the last seven months, the Team has responded to more than 800 service calls in a timely manner. Mr. Benjamin updated members on scheduled upgrades and equipment replacements. He advised that the system will be entirely a Positron environment. Mr. Benjamin stated that Phoenix Police is looking at splitting into two operational sites.

Mr. Spradling asked the status of having East and West Valley backup sites. Ms. MacFarlane stated that the State 911 fund does not cover backup centers. Mr. Benjamin commented that he thought the technology and the ability to implement this existed, and might be examined. He added that it is very expensive to maintain outlying areas. Mr. Spradling commented that ASU has a separate facility that might be combined with Tempe's.

Chairman Beck commented that these issues could be included in the 911 Five Year Plan. He stated that the reason many objectives were accomplished is that they were tracked in the Five Year Plan.

Ms. MacFarlane stated that she has been trying to build momentum in the West Valley area to pool resources. She commented that some of the PSAPs struggle with inadequate staffing and resources.

Mr. Werner stated that the County plans to relocate in 2007 to 35th Avenue and Lower Buckeye Road. He stated that they have eight departments with communications and should have one telecommunications center. Mr. Werner stated that he is a proponent of consolidation.

Chairman Beck stated that at one time, there were geographic separations between cities, but now all run together and there is much duplication of effort.

Mr. Faulkner stated that consolidation of Phoenix Fire and Police was examined. He added that there is no single backup center that could handle their calls if the center shut down. Mr. Faulkner stated that he hoped that Tempe will be successful in receiving the grant for 800 MHz. He commented it was reassuring to have Mesa's assistance if Phoenix needed help.

Ms. MacFarlane commented that there is a difference between consolidation and co-location. Consolidation infers change in operation, and co-location means building a structure and sharing infrastructure. Mr. Spradling commented on the facility built in Idaho that failed because it consolidated responsibilities and failed politically. Mr. Werner commented that Nevada has had a successful consolidation project.

Ms. Jaeger commented that conversations on this are already taking place. She said Representative Bennett brought up to her the idea of mandating consolidation.

Chairman Beck commented that a grass roots effort could be effective. He suggested putting it into the Five Year Plan and having a subgroup for evaluation. Chairman Beck stated that one other issue is fire departments dealing with County islands within fire service jurisdictions, and Rural Metro pulling out of areas that are not profitable to them. He stated that he wanted to ensure that the Oversight Team was aware that some reciprocal contracts are going on. Ms. MacFarlane commented that the 911 Office is on their checklist when they do that.

Chairman Beck requested that members contact him if they had items to put on the next agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.